

rod and (one hopes) a fishing permit, he will be trying his luck on the pools of Cocytus, Oceanus, Pyriphlegethon or Styx. And, fortunate or fishless, one can also be certain that in such delectable occupation, eternity, for him anyway, will not be a moment too long.

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J. FRASER NICOL: AN APPRECIATION OF HIS DEDICATION TO PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

This Society and the writ of its subject have lost an eminent worker whose exacting and meticulous approach to research reflected the sheen of traditions associated more with Edmund Gurney and Whately Carington than with the imperfections frequently found in the work of household names in later parapsychology.

Fraser Nicol toiled long and hard in a generally unrewarding vocation and, as I can vouchsafe, at great personal sacrifice. He gave to his calling a disciplined dedication into which he squeezed every ounce of mental and physical energy he could whip in or muster.

Fraser's spoken deliberations and written presentations, whether directed toward a general or restricted (and thus specialised) audience, were scholarly in argument, fair and frank, and expressed in a digestible and vibrant prose. Not only had he a comprehensive experience of all the departments of psychical research, he possessed close familiarity of the literature relevant to divers corners

of human endeavours which might have some bearing on his own tortuous vocation. Irreplaceable, no, but where is the successor?

To work with Fraser was an education in how psychical research should be undertaken. His appreciation of Carington's discipline is truly applicable to himself:

Nothing but the best one could do would satisfy him and having done one's best he would then propose improvements. But if he imposed heavy demands on others he was no less severe on himself. His own criteria were summarised in his own words — 'We must always remember that the methods of orthodox science are not necessarily good enough for psychical research.'¹

Fraser was of that school which abhorred proliferation of useless so called academic papers and books by keen, hard working researchers, on the one hand and, on the other, writers whose thinking (confused, hostile or misguided) demonstrated an abysmal ignorance of psychical research. With the latter came the 'multiplicity of multiform errors',² which continually clutter publications purporting to deal with evidence for and against the concerns of psychical research.

'When criticism is made on a quantitative basis', Fraser wrote more than 40 years ago, 'it must, if it is to be of any significance, conform to the rigorous standards inherent in this particular method.'³ Earlier, dismayed by an increasing deterioration in standards of evidence, he and a handful of prominent members of this society (including his fellow Scot, Eric Dingwall, Mrs. K. M. Goldney, Denys Parsons, Christopher Scott, and, suprisingly in view of later uncertainties, S. G. Soal) lent their names to a pronouncement prepared, so I have been reliably informed, by a youthful but already disillusioned future president of the Society:

However convinced one may be that genuine cases exist, it can hardly be denied that cases of unconscious exaggeration, pathological hallucination, faulty memory and hoaxing also exist. Only by maintaining a consistently high standard of evidence can one hope to eliminate these side effects and avoid mistaking the psychological for the psychic.⁴

High standards of evidence were Fraser Nicol's prime concern. During the 20 years or more he gave to ESP experiments, card guessing and PK, he gradually acquired a mathematical and statistical expertise sometimes not always agreeable to the addicts of alleged proven ESP. Over two decades his research involved something in the region of a quarter of a million calls; but by 1955 a growing scepticism with methods used by parapsychologists had hardened his view that the early promise of a clinical repeatability would be abortive.

Parapsychology, a term coined by Max Dessoir in 1889,⁵ made its plea for academic recognition in 1937. J. B. Rhine and William McDougall, the former's

¹ *ProcSPR* 48, p. 207, 1947. 'Personal Appreciation of Whately Carington'.

² *IJP* 8, p. 56, 1966. 'The Silences of Mr. Trevor Hall'.

³ *JSPR* 34, p. 249, 1948. 'A Significant Book Test'.

⁴ *JSPR* 34, p. 59, 1947.

⁵ Nicol, J. F. 'Philosophers as Psychic Investigators', *Proc of an International Conference, Copenhagen, 1976*, published by Parapsychology Foundation, p. 160, 1977. Nicol, during discussion, p. 168, of his paper, said that 'some scientists have done valuable work in our subject, but I should estimate that philosopher in proportion to their tiny numbers have done better. They have brought to psychical investigation a degree of open-mindedness and investigative acuity that is rare in any field'.

mentor, founded in that year the *Journal of Parapsychology*, proclaiming that the subject of its title 'may well be adopted into the English language to designate the more strictly experimental part of the whole field implied by psychical research.' They also declared:

... it is these strictly laboratory studies which most need the atmosphere and conditions to be found only in the universities; and it is these which the universities can most properly promote, leaving the extra-academic groups the still important task of collecting and recording all such reports of phenomena apparently expressive of unusual mental powers as occur spontaneously, obscure warnings and premonitions, veridical phantasms of the living and the dead, and other sporadic manifestations of mysterious origins.⁶

Rhine had published *Extra-Sensory Perception* in 1934, the year he and Fraser were elected to membership of the SPR.⁷ Rhine's monograph, providing overwhelming evidence of parapsychological wonders, made its appearance in the same year as publication of the first part of Carington's learned quantitative studies of trance personalities.⁸ Rhine during 1934 described to Carington how he had obtained remarkable results in attempts to influence the fall of a die.⁹ The contents of the letter were passed by Carington to Fraser Nicol (then living in Edinburgh) and thus began Fraser's long, tiring and tiresome journey to disheartening disenchantment some 20 years later.

Rhine's monograph had been received not without critical disbelief. R. H. Thouless, for instance, concluded that the results were open to the 'graver objection that the experimental methods are quite inadequately reported.'¹⁰ Such things could never be said about Carington's research.

During the first weeks of Fraser's membership of the SPR, in 1934, he answered Carington's appeal¹¹ for volunteers to take part in experiments emphasising precognitive guessing. This new worker under the Society's umbrella soon earned Carington's 'very special gratitude for the enthusiasm and thoroughness with which he organised a whole group of collaborators.'¹² No student of psychical research could have had a better tutor than Carington: Carington had no finer amanuensis and disciple and (dare I say it?) successor than Fraser Nicol.

⁶ *JP* 1, p. 7. First published March 1937. The periodical described itself as 'a scientific quarterly dealing with telepathy, clairvoyance and other parapsychological problems'. Compare with writ of SPR which examines 'without prejudice or prepossession and in a scientific spirit those faculties of man, real or supposed, which appear to be inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis'.

⁷ *JSPR* 28, 1934. Nicol was elected 27 June, p. 276. Rhine on 26 September, p. 296.

⁸ *ProcSPR* 42. One of Carington's subjects, Eileen Garrett, founded the Parapsychology Foundation in 1951.

⁹ *ProcSPR* 48, 1947. 'Some Experiments in Willed-Die Throwing'. The paper, jointly written by Carington and Nicol, did not appear until after the former's death. Carington, p. 164, writes: 'I accordingly wrote to Mr. Fraser Nicol, of Edinburgh, who had already performed a large number of experiments of this kind in connection with my experiments in Precognitive Guessing. In the course of the next three years . . . Mr. Nicol carried out a great deal of work on these lines, involving a total of more than 139,000 throws.'

¹⁰ Thouless, R. H. From a lecture to the SPR, as published *ProcSPR* 43, p. 37, 1935.

¹¹ *JSPR* 28, p. 270, 1934.

¹² *JSPR* 29, p. 86, 1935.

From this early association came their joint paper on experiments in willed die-throwing.¹³ The runs began on 7 October 1934 and were concluded on 15 August 1938. Delay in its appearance was a decision taken by the authors who modestly understated in their introductory section of the paper that 'it might well have been deemed improper' to have published their own 'lesser contribution, even with due acknowledgments' before Rhine was ready to put into print his 'much greater' contribution, an optimism subsequently rendered nugatory by later research.

D. J. West, surveying experimental parapsychology in Britain, quite rightly declared that the total score in the Carington-Nicol tests 'gave no evidence that the subjects succeeded in throwing the faces they desired, but a secondary effect was noted.'

The scores on the high targets were significantly positive, but in the total this was masked by a significantly below chance score on low targets. It cannot be said that this was a convincing proof of PK, especially considering the smallness of the effect.¹⁴

But Carington and Nicol made no claim of 'convincing proof' and their project was for many far better in design and recording than any of the American experiments. Fraser was to describe some years later, and not without wry self-correction, his courtship with the 'mischievous playfulness of dice', warning that the 'published reports of psychokinesis are in most cases rife with errors and misconceptions . . . plain to anyone who cares to examine those reports with an unbiased mind'.¹⁵

West's hope, expressed in his survey, was that given time, patience and sound technique, 'parapsychological experiments are by no means so unfruitful as certain critics would have one believe.'¹⁶ Fraser's indictment tells a more tragic end of the over-indulged affair between researchers and those experiments:

In the established sciences there are probably tens of thousands of repeatable experiments. In psychical research after nearly a century of almost continuous investigation there is no repeatable experiment. Not one. This is the Achilles' heel of our subject.¹⁷

Later in the same article¹⁸ he warned that 'dice throws on tables are not to be trusted, and I regret to say that this is particularly true of the millions of die throws performed by Dr. J. B. Rhine and his colleagues in the parapsychology laboratory at Duke University.' Many of those experiments, he wrote, were 'flawed by more errors and misconceptions than it is possible to describe here.'

* * *

¹³ See footnote 9 above. Rhine's articles, appearing *JP* 7, 1 and 2, 1943, were reviewed *JSPR* 33, pp. 30-32, 1943.

¹⁴ *JSPR* 37, p. 338, 1954.

¹⁵ Nicol, J. F. 'The Experimenter's Responsibility', p. 220, appears as part of Martin Ebon's *The Satan Trap*, Doubleday, New York, 1976.

¹⁶ *JSPR* 37, p. 345, 1954.

¹⁷ Nicol, J. F. *idem* p. 218.

¹⁸ *idem* p. 220.

Fraser Nicol was no Benedict Arnold in the world camp of psychical research. Quite to the contrary: he never deviated from a stance that a case for telepathy and other forms of ESP is much better than it is for psychokinesis. Familiarity with a hundred years of research showed 'evidence of such strength as to put the reality of the phenomena beyond rational dispute.'¹⁹ But his hope for convincing proof lay in a direction explored by those great founders of psychical research more than a century ago and whose memory he served.

Fraser's mental and physical energies—deceptive for he was of small build, diffident until angered—were tremendous. Salad days were not confined solely to the examination of PK. Cautious perhaps to an extreme, both in field investigation and literary research, he arranged for time away from personal and professional affairs, as well as other activity with Carington (in connexion with the paranormal cognition of drawings), to visit mediums and investigate haunts and sundry spontaneous occurrences. The dregs and dross of marginal areas of psychical research, the mediumistic platitudes, chicanery, misunderstandings so easily hidden in the aberrations of human behaviour, were listened to, observed, carefully sifted for likely evidence of ESP and other possibilities. And of much greater importance were his growing skills in mathematical and statistical comprehension, so much needed in quantitative studies. For the statistical controversies concerning experimental parapsychology were soon to bulge the printed pages of this periodical.

Settling in London in the 1940's, and just a moment's step from the sometime home of William Eglinton (or 'Eglinton' the printer's devil turned 'medium' whose near-criminal trickeries tried to destroy this Society in the 1880's), Fraser moved toward full-time devoted dedication to his aggravating and chosen subject. Field experience and a growing scholarship (innate and self-developed) was welcomed by the Society's bedrock in its old premises at Tavistock Square. Stalwarts from that more promising period for psychical research, such as Denys Parsons and D. J. West, are far better qualified than the present writer to discuss Fraser's arduous industry on behalf of the Society's writ. Fraser and I did not meet until the spring of 1966, in New York, our discussions by and large then concerned with matters not linked to the SPR.

Fraser's interesting survey of Spiritualism appeared in 1948, the year he was coopted to the SPR Council.²⁰ This is an article which reflects encyclopedic and scholarly erudition which, at Council's request, he was to bring to the Society's library.²¹ Following a visit by West to Rhine's laboratory in the summer of 1949, when he 'made copies of a considerable number of score sheets of PK experiments, and brought these back to England,'²² Fraser began a major piece of research on Council's behalf.²³

¹⁹ *idem* p. 220.

²⁰ *JSPR* 34, pp. 271–286, 1948. Nicol's survey appeared under the head 'The Fox Sisters and the Development of Spiritualism'. Miss O'Keeffe has confirmed the effective month of his cooption was December. Nicol remained on Council until 1957 and, owing to absence abroad, he was elected Corresponding Member. *JSPR* 35, p. 6, 1949.

²¹ *JSPR* 35, 1950. Jan–Feb Supplement to *Journal*.

²² *JSPR* 35, pp. 165–177, 1950. 'The Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University, and the American Society for Psychical Research'. *fn* p. 172.

²³ *JSPR* 36, 1951. Mar–Apr Supplement to *Journal*.

This took considerable time and, by May 1951, resulted in his joining the staff of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke where, after a somewhat short (and, I believe, an eye-opening experience), he recognised, as John Beloff in a different context was to observe much later, 'the early promise of the Rhine Laboratory was deceptive and that parapsychology faced a long uphill struggle for recognition.'²⁴

Fraser kept Council fully-informed of the harrowing difficulties he had encountered at Duke, an imbroglio only hinted at in print. To be styled a frenetic dissident in flight from the parapsychological Olympus, and the danger of a costly action for libel, might have damaged a scholarly career and brought financial ruin to one who had moved several thousands of miles to further what he considered to be an enquiry of major significance to mankind. Invited to join the research team at the American Society for Psychical Research, eventually moving from North Carolina to Massachusetts, he compiled a detailed, in-depth index to that organisation's publications and carried on work in experimental parapsychology.

The statistical controversy stimulated by one, Spencer Brown,²⁵ provided Fraser with opportunity, on at least two occasions, to produce papers of not inconsiderable importance to the statistical calculations of experimental parapsychology as can be found in his masterly paper, 'Randomness: The Background, and some new Investigations.'²⁶

Later, when he reviewed Spencer Brown's book, Fraser stressed again that it was 'the failure of psychical research to achieve a repeatable design that makes Mr. Spencer Brown's remarks so devastating.'²⁷ But in the earlier article he expressed belief and, so far as I know, never changed that view, that 'even though Mr. Spencer Brown's conjectures become demonstrated truths, there would still remain ample evidence from the *qualitative* (my italics) field to sustain a case—I believe a conclusive case—for the reality of paranormal cognition.'²⁸

* * *

Fraser Nicol's second marriage was to his prime collaborator in America, Betty Humphrey, a psychologist who for several years had been, among other tasks, associate editor of the *Journal of Parapsychology* and one of Rhine's colleagues. She had earlier visited and worked at the SPR in London, and now (having also left Duke), she and Fraser began to publish the results of their joint industry. There was an experiment designed to test the correlation of personality

²⁴ Beloff, John. *The Importance of Psychical Research*, SPR p. 9, 1988.

²⁵ *JSPR* 36, p. 536, 1951. G. Spencer Brown awarded Perrott Studentship in Psychical Research. A good deal concerning statistical controversy appeared in *JSPR* 37 and 38, culminating with C. Scott's review of Brown's *Probability and Scientific Inference*, Longmans, London. 1957. *JSPR* 39, pp. 217–234, 1958, see ref 29 below.

²⁶ *JSPR* 38, pp. 71–87, 1955.

²⁷ *IJP* 1, pp. 47–63, 1959. p. 54 of that article.

²⁸ *JSPR* 38, p. 86, 1955.

factors with ESP ability.²⁹ Their report of this work—financed jointly by the ASPR and Rockefeller Foundation³⁰—was delivered to the International Conference of Parapsychological Studies at Utrecht in 1953. Soal, at the beginning of his review,³¹ noted that this was ‘perhaps the most ambitious of the attempts hitherto made to discover correlations between levels of ESP scoring and personality factors in the mental make-up of the guessers.’

Space inevitably must limit discussion of other major contributions by the joint husband and wife team which included papers on ‘The Feeling of Success in ESP’³² and ‘The Repeatability Problem in ESP-Personality Research,’³³ as well as aiding Gertrude Scheindler in the ‘sheep-goat’ experiment.³⁴

In May 1953 the Ciba Foundation held its Symposium on ESP at Cambridge University. Fraser’s talk on some difficulties in the way of scientific recognition of ESP received special mention by Michael Scriven in his review of the published proceedings.³⁵ Not one to fudge the gut of the essential problem, Fraser declared that ‘four factors’ operated to produce indifference or hostility to psychical research:

These are the apparent irrelevance of psychical research to other scientific fields, the failure of psychical researchers to obtain reproducible phenomena, discordant views on the validity of evidence, and inflated claims of discoveries.³⁶

‘Discordant views’ and ‘inflated claims’ are still today no strangers to experimental parapsychology. ‘Reproducible phenomena’ would surely do wonders for the emotional welfare of many a disheartened newcomer to parapsychology.

* * *

By 1963, having spent about eleven years in various projects at the American Society for Psychical Research, the Parapsychology Foundation now provided Fraser with further opportunities for experimental and historical research. As a senior consultant at the Foundation, later a member of its board of trustees, he built up its magnificent library, advising and helping callers from all over with varied problems in their research, vetting manuscripts submitted to the Foundation for publication, and assisting with the programmes for international conferences on parapsychology.

Fraser’s comprehensive familiarity with the literature of psychical research, and, particularly, the experimental work undertaken by its founders, will become obvious to students of our subject who study a sampling of his carefully

²⁹ *JASPR* 47, 1953. ‘The Exploration of ESP and Human Personality’.

³⁰ *JSPR* 37, 1954. Mar–Apr Supplement to *Journal*.

³¹ *JSPR* 37, pp. 307–310, 1954.

³² *JSPR* 38, pp. 192–193, 1953. Review of *JASPR* 49, Jan 1955.

³³ *JSPR* 38, p. 195, 1955. Review of *JASPR* 39, October 1955.

³⁴ *JSPR* 40, pp. 70–71, 1959.

³⁵ *JSPR* 38, pp. 373–374, 1956. Nicol’s paper appears, pp. 24–38, *Ciba Foundation Symposium on ESP*, Churchill, London, 1956.

³⁶ *Ciba* 36.

researched historical papers.³⁷ One such paper, a review of a book by Trevor Hall,³⁸ taxed heavily Fraser's scholarship which subsequently required the supplementary skill of investigative journalism.

Hall's prime concern was with the circumstances surrounding Edmund Gurney's untimely death. Hall unfortunately turned conjecture into fact and Fraser pulled no punches. Gurney, so it was alleged, twice discovered frauds in experiments, concealed the 'evidence' from his SPR colleagues, and killed himself. G. A. Smith (Gurney's secretary and a gifted hypnotist) conspired with a journalist, Douglas Blackburn, in fraudulent telepathy, Blackburn later confessing (in print) his frauds which Smith denied. Dressed-in with dramatic distortions of fact were conjectural fallacies, blatant inaccuracies, and attacks on the integrity of early workers in psychical research.

Hall's command of narrative gives a persuasive touch to his thesis until investigative research revealed another side to the story. Errors in an earlier book on Crookes³⁹ were not put right even by Dingwall in his entertaining monograph⁴⁰ who reluctantly admits that Hall had not discussed Crooke's investigation of Anna Eva Fay, a 'mediumistic' entertainer whose 'phenomena' were more spectacular than those seen with Florence Cook. The circumstances of Crookes's investigation of and relationship with 'Mrs.' Fay are such to pour cold water on the nonsense that Crookes was one of Florence Cook's sleeping partners. So far as I know Hall has never commented on this glaring gap in his historical research.

Criticism of Hall's book on Gurney was not confined to Fraser's devastating review. Alan Gauld, a year earlier (in 1965) and with a weighty body of historical evidence, warned that the case Hall makes against the early leaders of the SPR is 'frequently unjustified' and presentation of the charges 'is so uniformly misleading, that his views cannot command the attention which his skill as a writer would otherwise win for them.'⁴¹ Not unexpectedly, Eric Dingwall (who had frequently worked with Hall) felt obliged to reply to these criticisms⁴² but his arguments do not weaken Gauld's correctives to the conjectures. 'Ding' suprisingly met Fraser's criticisms with an astonishing silence, the excuse being, as given to me on more than one occasion, that the legal position prevented any further comment on Fraser's review of Hall's book!

There was, in fact, astonishing silence by Fraser in the years which followed publication of his review. Hall replied two years later⁴³ and John Beloff, briefly

³⁷ Nicol, J. F. For instance see *IJP* 3, pp. 26-45, 1961; *IJP* 8, pp. 227-247, 1966 and also refs 40 and 47 below.

³⁸ *IJP* 8, pp. 5-58, 1966. Ref 2 above, Review of *The Strange Case of Edmund Gurney*, Duckworth, London, 1964.

³⁹ *ProcSPR* 54, pp. 25-183, 1964. Part 195 of *Proceedings* contains three papers on Crookes and Florence Cook.

⁴⁰ Dingwall, E. J. *The Critics' Dilemma*, a monograph published privately by the author from his home at Crowhurst, 1966. The present writer allowed Dingwall access to his collection of private material dealing with the 'mediums' Mary Rosina Showers and Anna Eva Fay, which, in the present writer's view, 'clears' Crookes of an intimate relationship with Florence Cook.

⁴¹ *JSPR* 43, pp. 53-62, 1965. 'Mr. Hall and the SPR'.

⁴² *JSPR* 43, pp. 218-224. Includes Gauld's Rejoinder to Dingwall.

⁴³ *IJP* 10, pp. 149-164, 1968.

reviewing the latter's comments, expressed surprise that a Rejoinder by Fraser did not simultaneously appear in the *International Journal of Parapsychology*. Beloff rightly observed that 'at any rate, it seems that Mr. Hall has evaded the crux of Nicol's charge, namely his exposure of the inconsistencies in Blackburn's confession . . .'

'It is an editorial custom for the reviewer rather than the author to be allowed the last word. It is a pity that here the custom has had to be honoured in the breach rather than the observance.'⁴⁴

A libel action, arising out of a circular distributed in this country, had delayed publication of Hall's reply to Fraser's criticism. The circular, admittedly badly phrased, had been prepared by the Foundation's editorial staff, and, after its distribution in the United Kingdom, Trevor Hall was obliged to seek legal advice and writs were issued against the Foundation, Mrs. Garrett, Fraser, and myself. Behind the scenes, and during discussions with lawyers, reconciliation attempts for a friendly settlement between the parties were not immediately fruitful.

By the summer of 1967, if not before, Fraser had provided Counsel with a mass of new material to support the defence, voluminous evidence supplemental to much of what he had already written in his review. Following a meeting in the south of France, with Eileen Garrett and Fraser, I spent some months undertaking an indepth study of the early history of the SPR, with particular reference to the events surrounding Smith's relationship with Blackburn and the early telepathic experiments. Forgotten material was unearthed from the SPR archives. The Myers and Sidgwick papers at Trinity College, Cambridge, were examined, foreign publications translated, family correspondence borrowed and assessed for additional evidence, runs of newspapers at Brighton and Tonbridge (where Blackburn worked as a journalist) studied and extracts copied, and finally, perhaps the most exciting of the discoveries, meetings with journalists who as young men had worked with Blackburn.

Fraser fitted together, both in draft manuscript and reports for study by Counsel, a scholarly study of events and experiments almost unparalleled in the literature dealing with the early history of the SPR. However, these major and newly-discovered footnotes to history were to be unexpectedly suppressed.

A settlement (after a good deal of off-stage drama) was finally reached between the solicitors acting for all the parties and, in order to avoid further costs and litigation, it was agreed that Hall could reply to Fraser's criticisms (a matter never in dispute). Fraser and I were also given assurances that the former's Rejoinder to Hall would appear in the *International Journal of Parapsychology* at the same time. An apology would head the publication of Hall's Reply and express that nothing in Fraser's review 'was intended to cast any slur on the honesty of purpose of Mr. Hall'. The Foundation and Fraser also agreed to 'withdraw any imputation contained in the article which may have given this impression'. At the same time withdrawal was made on behalf of myself, 'in respect of the circular letter announcing the review'.

⁴⁴ *JSPR* 45, pp. 73-74, 1969.

Fraser sent me a draft copy of his Rejoinder (he had already been shown Hall's copy of the Reply). The Foundation later requested Fraser to shorten and take out any disparaging references to Dingwall's scholarship, which he did.

The Foundation next informed Fraser that a final decision had been taken *not* to publish his Rejoinder. Fraser in Massachusetts, and I, living in Bexhill-on-Sea, pressed the Foundation in New York and Eileen Garrett, then in the south of France, to change a decision made without reference to us, parties to the action. On 21 May 1968 a solicitor acting for the Foundation in London wrote to me and confirmed, 'I have received and passed on to you an oral assurance from Mrs. Garrett that Mr. Nicol's Rejoinder is to be published in the September issue'. But the article never appeared. Fraser shortly afterwards ceased all association with the Foundation (as was so in my case).

Notice of suppression of a paper which had some bearing on its own affairs was sent to the SPR. Fraser, in a letter dated 17 September 1969, wrote that it seemed Council had 'passed a resolution suggesting that the Editor might invite me to submit a reply to Hall'. Dingwall, learning of this letter, advised several members of Council that the paper by Fraser could not be published!

Meanwhile, Fraser had been asked by Professor Broad to review Alan Gauld's recent book on the founders of the SPR. When it appeared⁴⁵ Dingwall 'waxed' enthusiastically to me over Fraser's scholarship; he was utterly flabbergasted to learn that this was *not* the expanded paper still in preparation, the one based on the draft suppressed by the Foundation much earlier.

Fraser wrote in his article that Gauld's book on the early life of the SPR and its founders to be without rival. His review was seasoned with gems from his own research and both Gauld's book and the review must be considered 'primer' reading for all newcomers to serious study of our subject. Fraser's comments on Hall were not included in the review and Dingwall once again agitated for their suppression.

My subsequent association with Fraser continued until 1982. I visited Lexington many times, enjoying Betty and Fraser's hospitality, allowed 'free range' in the library and permitted use of his marvellous indexing system. We met at least on three occasions in London during his visits to England and once, when he stayed with us in Bexhill, former SPR colleagues visited our home and renewed his friendship. In 1972, when over in the U.K. to address a meeting of the Parapsychology Association, Fraser worked again at the SPR, advising on my work for Combined Index IV to *Journal* and *Proceedings* and, at the suggestion of Professor Mundle, helped me with the preparation of a new version of the *Selective Guide to Publications*.

Fraser felt, I am certain, a continuing sense of irritating anguish over the suppression of his Rejoinder. He busied himself with freelance writing, giving to various bodies lectures as well as a course in Parapsychology at a local college. Something of a hermit, so to avoid too much contact with the outside world which would keep him away from his beloved psychical research, he never discouraged serious inquiries by investigators. But he didn't suffer fools gladly. A

⁴⁵ *ProcSPR* 55, pp. 341-369, 1972. 'The Founders of the SPR'—a review of Gauld's *The Founders of Psychical Research*, Routledge, London, 1968.

continuing difficulty in our personal association was my friendship with Dingwall. I recognised that the aura of charismatic mystique which Dingwall carried with him was the naughty art of, so to say, an academic prestidigitator. But we had many interests in common (not always psychical research). He had his shortcomings, as we all do, but he was helpful and generous to me in ways not easy to reject. I found it difficult to accept, as was insisted, that 'Ding' had cost Fraser his means of employment so late in life.

For many years I lived near to Dingwall's house in Crowhurst and, after Margaret Dingwall's death, visited him regularly at his somewhat gloomy flat in St. Leonard's. We were extremely frank in our differing points of view. Now and then he would come over to Bexhill and, on several occasions, I pursued the anxiety which Fraser had suggested for so long. 'Ding' always denied that he was responsible for Fraser's loss of employment with the Foundation but he always maintained that Fraser could not publish a Rejoinder to Hall's Reply. It would be, as he insisted, legally impossible. His reasoning, of this I am now certain, had nothing to do with the law. Fraser's Rejoinder would probably slip 'Ding' off an encyclopedic pedestal, a crash in the golden years of his late age he might find difficult to endure. He had, I believe seen Fraser's draft Rejoinder (which was highly compressed) and knew there was much fresh material on the story which, he regretted, I would not share with him.

In the tug-of-war of emotional claims, quite wrongly, Fraser Nicol fell victim in a curious battle to preserve 'Ding's' scholarship. I do not think 'Ding's' effort was intentionally to destroy Fraser's career in psychical research. All Fraser had to do, Dingwall once told me, was *not* to insist that the Rejoinder must be published. Something Fraser could not do. And he had my support for that stance.

I do not know why Fraser's paper has not yet appeared. He thought at one time the SPR might not have the funds to publish it. My friends A. S. Jarman and Maurice Barbanell, now sadly both dead, offered to finance its private publication but Fraser, I think, wanted to see his material published by the one organisation whose history meant so much to him.

My last visit to Lexington took place in October 1980. Two years later, after the Cambridge conference, Fraser came up to my office in London; by then, while agreeing on principle, we disagreed on ways and means to improve what we considered to be the SPR's parlous state of administration. Fraser's approach was a cautious and diffident one; mine somewhat more volatile. Be that as it may, and now with the benefit of reflection, our differences in respect of the SPR were I think just excuses. Our real disagreement was the undercurrent of my friendship with Dingwall. I have often wished both Scotsmen could have been settled together, whiskies in hand, their differences resolved, glasses raised in a cheer of reconciliation. Unlike myself they preferred a non-alcoholic way to continue unfruitful antagonism.

Fraser's literary successors may encourage publication of his great work on Gurney. I hope they do. Within the pages of that work one may find an extension to matters he once raised with me. I will quote briefly from two of the hundreds of informative letters I had from him. In one he wrote he did not know 'whether we survive or not. But the subject is far and away the most important in the whole range of psychical research'. And in another:

The subject in which nearly everybody has an interest is Survival. *Proceedings* has 3,000 pages about Mrs. Piper, and vast amounts about Mrs. Leonard and cross-correspondences. They are immensely readable and they stimulate thought. Their continuous publication enhanced the credit of the Society and steadily increased the membership.⁴⁶

To the Symposium of the Ciba Foundation he stated, forcefully and without pessimism:

If we try to look forward, it may seem very probable that the interrelations of paranormal cognition with other factors of personality such as extraversion-introversion, dominance-submission, intelligence, neurotic tendencies and the like, will form the main line of advance in psychical research in the coming years. We may learn something.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, sympathies go to Fraser's widow Betty Humphrey, and her stepdaughter, Louise, and with those sympathies also travel my sad thoughts that psychical research has lost perhaps its greatest worker since the death of Carington. Circumstance prevented him from leaving us his successor. If he has survived, and can digest our intent, he will know I am not alone in mourning our great loss.

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⁴⁶ Murphy, Gardner and Ballou, R. O. *William James on Psychical Research*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1961. See fn pp. 204-205 for an interesting aspect to the survival hypothesis, part of a weighty project suggested by Nicol to the ASPR board of trustees.

⁴⁷ *Ciba*, p. 27.

OBITUARY

WILLIAM ALLAN BERRIDGE BARHAM

Allan Barham died in hospital in Canterbury on 29 September, a few days after a major operation. He was 77.

Allan was for many years an active psychical researcher and a prominent member of the SPR and a variety of other bodies devoted to parapsychological enquiry, in particular the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies. As well as a number of scholarly papers published in specialist journals Allan wrote many pamphlets of a more popular kind on a wide range of parapsychological topics, and two eminently readable surveys of the field for the interested layman: *Strange to Relate* and *Life Unlimited*. In recent years he had become fascinated by the life and work of William Jackson Crawford, and the last few months of his life were occupied with a critical study of the researcher which was, sadly, never completed. Readers of the Society's journal will form an idea of what might have been from the two papers which appeared last year, in July and October (*Journal of the SPR*, Vol. 55, Nos. 812, 813). Until fairly recently Allan had been a regular speaker and occasional broadcaster, profoundly enjoyable rather than profound, and eager to communicate his enthusiasms to all who cared to listen and learn.

Allan was a clergyman by profession if not, at any rate latterly, by persuasion; and a succession of country parishes had over the years afforded him the chance to extend and deepen his interest in the history, theory and practice of psychical research. As a consequence these interests ranged remarkably widely, from dowsing, ufology and psychic healing to ghosts, mediumship and—above